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Beth Potier

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April 2, 2014

Grant to UNH Will Enhance Workforce Development for NH Child Welfare Services

DURHAM, N.H. – A new grant to the University of New Hampshire’s social work program will enhance child welfare workforce development in New Hampshire, providing professional development, education, and UNH interns to the state’s Division for Children, Youth and Families. The [National Child Welfare Workforce Institute](#) University Partnership grant, for more than \$700,000 over five years, is one of just 11 awarded to universities nationwide.

The grant aims to strengthen the shared commitment of UNH and the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) with three initiatives.

Traineeships: Over five years, the grant will fund 25 full-time or equivalent part-time undergraduate or graduate social work students who are preparing to work in child welfare.

Workforce development: UNH and DCYF will collaborate to design activities to address workforce challenges and opportunities such as facilitating transition to work or promoting retention of child welfare professionals.

Curriculum development: In partnership with the DCYF, the department of social work will develop curriculum related to evidence-based child welfare practice and trauma. In addition, the department will develop a certificate in child welfare practice.

The grant is targeted toward improving implementation of data-driven decision-making and evidence-based practice approaches within DCYF. “DCYF is dedicated to enhancing internal data analysis capability and workforce development; they were essential partners in developing this grant proposal,” says Melissa Wells, associate professor of social work and co-principal investigator on the grant.

“DCYF firmly believes that a skilled and well-educated workforce is critical to improving outcomes for New Hampshire children and families involved in child welfare,” says Sherri Levesque, administrator of DCYF’s Bureau of Organizational Learning & Quality Improvement. “With this grant and our partnership with UNH, those children and families will be better served through data-driven decisions and best practices.”

The majority of the funding will go toward providing full in-state UNH tuition and fees, plus a \$2,500 stipend, to five students each year who will work in child welfare upon graduation. While the funding may go to either undergraduate or graduate social work students, priority will be given to students currently working at DCYF.

“These traineeships will greatly increase our capacity to provide DCYF with graduates who are well qualified to meet New Hampshire child welfare needs with outcome-focused practice skills in child welfare,” says co-principal investigator Anne Broussard, associate professor of social work and chair of the social work department at UNH.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

Media Contact: [Beth Potier](#) | 603-862-1566 | UNH Media Relations | [@unhnews](#) | [@unhscience](#)

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